

Literacy B.C. NEWSLETTER

December 1995

Volume 1, Number 3

The board and staff
of Literacy B.C.
wish you a happy
holiday season and
the very best for the
New Year!



1995 was a year of tremendous growth and change for Literacy B.C. In June we merged with the Adult Literacy Contact Centre to form a united provincial literacy organization. We're delighted with the results of the merger in helping us to provide the best possible service to the literacy community and the general public in British Columbia. To keep you up-to-date on our activities, we've included a copy of our 1994-95 Annual Report with this newsletter.

We want to thank the donors, sponsors, members, and funders who have encouraged and supported us this past year. We deeply appreciate your commitment to literacy and to our organization. We're looking forward to the challenges and rewards that working with you will bring us in 1996.

Thank You, Donors!

Much of the work of Literacy B.C. would not be possible without the generous support of so many individuals and corporate donors. It's time to give thanks to:

The many people who make individual donations to Literacy B.C.

The sponsors and golfers who helped raise \$30,000 at our **1995 PGI golf tournament**.

Everyone who attended the **Denny Boyd Dinner** and helped to raise \$3,000.

Bollum Books for donating \$1,185 in celebration of the opening of their new Vancouver store.

The **Canadian Bar Association, B.C. Branch**, for raising \$3,292 from a golf tournament to support Literacy B.C.

The **Canadian Direct Marketing Association** for raising \$3,000 in support of Literacy B.C.

Mallard Books for a donation of \$288.

The **Rotary Club of Vancouver** for a \$3,500 donation to purchase computer equipment.

Staples, The Office Superstore, for donating a computer as part of the opening of its Vancouver store.

The **Stewart Family Fund** for a \$1,000 donation.

Superior Propane has continued its strong commitment to literacy in Canada during 1995.

The **1995 Fill for Literacy** campaign raised \$15,986 in B.C. The money was distributed to literacy programs in B.C. communities where Superior Propane has outlets. We want to thank Superior Propane, its staff, and their families, for making this campaign such a success.

We also want to thank Superior Propane for a donation of \$2,440 to Literacy B.C.

consists of a bursary and a certificate of achievement.

We are pleased to announce that the winners of the **1995 Superior Propane Learner Award** in B.C. are Maddy Biccum from Rosedale, and John Fehr from Fort St. John. The awards were presented at the Literacy B.C. Annual General Meeting in October. Maddy and John, congratulations!

As part of its support for the PGI golf tournaments, each year Superior Propane presents an award to reward achievement by a learner. The award

And to all the learners who took the time to apply - thank you! Each of you deserves recognition for your commitment to learning. 

Projects Update

How to Survive and Thrive in the 90's: Fund Raising Fundamentals

Literacy B.C. is pleased to offer a unique opportunity for literacy organizations in B.C. to learn the fundamentals of fund raising.

A two-day, "how-to" workshop will offer practical advice about:

- ◆ the ingredients for fund raising success
- ◆ putting the "fun" into fund raising
- ◆ marketing your organization
- ◆ planning a successful fund raising strategy for your organization

Workshop participants will also receive a manual full of practical ideas, tools, and resources.

Judi Angel, a fund raising and public relations professional, will present the workshops. Judi has run her own fund raising consulting practice since 1992 and is a former instructor in the Fund Raising Management Program at Vancouver Community College.

The workshops will be scheduled regionally, from January to May 1996. The cost is \$50 per person.

If you are interested in hosting a regional fund raising workshop, call Linda Mitchell at Literacy B.C.: 1-800-663-1293. ☐

Regional Literacy Networks

The purpose of this project is to strengthen regional literacy networks and to develop models for regional literacy coordination in B.C.

Six regional literacy coordinators are involved in the project, which runs from October 1995 to May 1996. The coordinators and their regions are:

- ◆ Paula Davies, New Caledonia
- ◆ Leona Gadsby, East Kootenay
- ◆ Norah Mclean, Malaspina/North Island
- ◆ Sue Port, Selkirk
- ◆ Maureen Stephens, Okanagan
- ◆ Northern Lights: To be announced

The Regional Literacy Coordinators are responsible for:

- ◆ developing regional literacy networks
- ◆ establishing a literacy resource collection within the region
- ◆ coordinating a regional professional development event
- ◆ developing and strengthening regional learner networks
- ◆ providing support, information and consultation within the literacy field and to the public
- ◆ developing models for community development

Literacy B.C. will be applying for a cost-shared grant to continue and expand the project. A report on the 1995-96 phase of the project will be available next summer. ☐

The Literacy B.C. Board of Directors

Following our Annual General Meeting this October, new officers were elected on the Literacy B.C. Board. The officers are:

President: Alan Dolman (Okanagan)

Vice President: Corey Blades
(Northern Lights)

Treasurer: Melanie Austin (Camosun)

Secretary: Trish Harrison (Selkirk)

Learner Representative: Erna Barwich
(Fraser Valley)

Past President: Bob Gadsby (East Kootenay)

The other Literacy B.C. directors are:

Carol Bossio (Malaspina)

Ingrid Braathen (North Island)

Marnie Crowe (East Kootenay)

Debbie DeMare (Cariboo)

Lynda Fownes (Capilano)

Brenda Giles (Vancouver)

Janet Harris (Northwest)

Carol Johnson (New Caledonia)

Nominations are currently open to fill vacant board positions in the Douglas and Kwantlen regions.

The main work of the board in the coming year will focus on:

- ◆ building regional networks and services
- ◆ developing a long term strategic plan
- ◆ providing a strong voice for learners
- ◆ maintaining a high level of information, referral, training, and consultation services for literacy in British Columbia 

Who We Are

Our mission is to promote literacy, to support literacy learners, to develop community partnerships and to present a united voice on literacy.

We are supported by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada; the B.C. Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour; memberships; and donations.

You can reach us at:

622 - 510 West Hastings Street

Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8

Phone: 1-800-663-1293 (toll-free)

(604) 684-0624 (Lower Mainland)

Fax: (604) 684-8520

Donations to Literacy B.C. are tax deductible.

A very special thank you to the people who have contributed to Literacy B.C. in memory of Alan Sordi. Alan was killed this November while mountain climbing in Nepal. It was Alan's wish that, in the event of his death, donations be made to Literacy B.C. in his name. We wish to express our deepest condolences to Alan's family and friends, and our gratitude for their generous donations to Literacy B.C.

1996-97 Cost-shared Projects

Watch for cost-shared applications in January 1996

The call for proposals for 1996-97 B.C. adult literacy cost-shared projects will be made in January 1996. Application packages will be distributed to the B.C. literacy field at that time. The firm application deadline is February 29, 1996.

Fifty literacy practitioners from all regions of B.C. met in Vancouver in October for a consultation regarding the Adult Literacy Cost-Shared Program Fund. The purpose of the consultation was to discuss possible new directions for the provincial portion of the program.

The cost-shared program is shared by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources and Development Canada, and the B.C. Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. The program is subject each year to the availability of funds.

Participants in the consultation had various levels of experience in applying for and conducting cost-shared projects since the program began in 1987. After sharing information about recently completed projects, participants offered suggestions for changes to the types of projects to be funded through the provincial portion.

The Ministry is now in the process of making decisions about these recommendations. For this reason,

the annual call for proposals for cost-shared projects has been delayed until January 1996. The application deadline remains **February 29, 1996**. Applications will not be accepted after that date.

It is hoped that funds can be made available to successful applicants by mid-summer 1996.

Patty Bossort, the Community Liaison for the cost-shared program, helps applicants develop their project proposals. The role of the Community Liaison is to advise applicants about their project ideas; keep them informed of changes to the guidelines and eligibility criteria; and review project descriptions and budgets. Anyone interested in applying for 1996-97 cost-shared funds should contact, as soon as possible:

Patty Bossort
Adult Literacy Cost-shared Projects
Community Liaison (in Silverton, B.C.)
Phone: 358-2745 or 358-2746
Fax: 358-2746
Email: 75060.3120@compuserve.com

LEARN • LEARN • LEARN

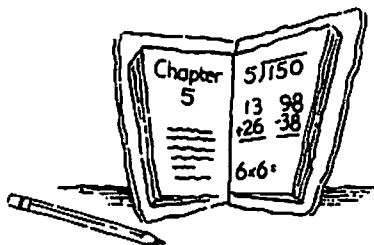
Look under LEARN in the Yellow Pages™

A special page for adults who want to improve their reading, writing, and math skills, lists the Literacy B.C. toll-free number under LEARN in every Yellow Pages directory in B.C.

The LEARN Page is a national project of ABC CANADA, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving literacy in Canada. The full-page ad has listed not-for-profit literacy referral numbers in all Yellow Pages directories in Canada since 1993. The advertising space is donated by the Canadian Yellow Pages Service at a media value of nearly four million dollars. In B.C. the LEARN Page appears courtesy of the B.C. Telephone Company.

LEARN • LEARN • LEARN • LEARN • LEARN • LEARN

Helping people learn to learn.



Are you an adult who would like to improve your reading, writing or math? If so, call the number at the bottom of this page.

There are people in your community willing to help.
You'll soon discover that you're not alone.



Organizations listed below are not-for-profit. This advertisement appears courtesy of BC TEL Yellow Pages™.



Literacy is everybody's business.

Call toll free 1-800-663-1293

LEARN • LEARN • LEARN

We can help you
with your reading.

To get the job you want or keep the job you have,
reading is important.

If you are an adult who would like to
improve your reading, writing or math, look
under LEARN in your Yellow Pages™ directories.

There are people in your community who can
help. You are not alone.

ABC
CANADA

LOOK UNDER LEARN.

Look under LEARN in the Yellow Pages™ directories

This is one of three posters produced by ABC CANADA to encourage the public to "Look under LEARN." The black and white posters are part of a public awareness campaign about the LEARN Page that has included television, radio and print ads which have appeared across Canada.

The other two posters are directed at people who may know someone who wants help with reading, writing, or math.

Literacy B.C. can provide you with posters to distribute in your community. Phone: 1-800-663-1293. 

Resources

Directory of Plain Language Resources

The Plain Language Society has compiled a directory of Society members who develop plain language materials and teach those skills. The directory contains information on:

- ◆ what plain language is
- ◆ the basics of developing plain language materials
- ◆ evaluating plain language practitioners
- ◆ the experience and qualifications of practitioners in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island

Copies of the directory are available free of charge from Literacy B.C.
Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Provincial Literacy Resource Centre Study: Statement of Needs & Resource Centre Recommendations

This report is the final product of a study designed to: assess the need for a resource centre to collect and distribute adult literacy materials; develop recommendations and a model for implementing the centre.

The study was funded by the B.C. literacy cost-shared program and managed by Literacy B.C. in partnership with the Open Learning

Agency. Bancroft Planning & Research Associates conducted the study under the direction of an advisory committee consisting of representatives from the Literacy Materials Committee, Literacy B.C., the Adult Literacy Contact Centre, and the B.C. Library Association.

Based on a needs assessment in the first phase of the study, the report recommends that a provincial literacy resource centre library become part of the overall operations of Literacy B.C. One of the primary needs identified by the study was for a "one-stop shopping centre" to supply a range of literacy-related services and resources.

The report recommends that the resource library focus on building collections to support all users and literacy levels, but emphasize materials relevant to literacy practitioners, trainers and tutors; hard-to-get material; and the archiving of historical and limited editions of unpublished material.

The report presents a model for proposed operations and staffing which builds on Literacy B.C.'s current organizational structure.

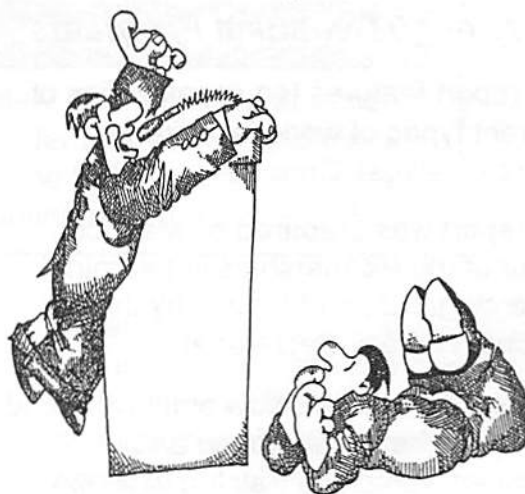
Copies of the report are available from Literacy B.C. Copies of the *Needs Assessment Research Report* are available on loan. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.



Resources

Learners Speak Out

This book describes a training course, designed by Project Literacy Victoria, to help adult learners feel confident about making public speeches. The book includes advice on topics such as thinking through a speech, writing a speech, and making a public relations kit. The book also includes facts and figures to answer questions often asked about literacy. Copies of the book are available from Literacy B.C. Phone 1-800-663-1293.



1995 Learner Events in B.C.: Two Reports

Provincial Learners Conference

In May 1995, 70 learners gathered at Cultus Lake for the 1995 Provincial Learners Conference. The conference was organized by Literacy B.C. and a planning committee of learners from across the province. The report includes photographs and descriptions by participants about their experiences at the conference.



Learners Talking to Learners

This book contains reports, written by learners, of over 30 learner events held around the province this year. An insert with ideas and exercises for using the book is included with the report. The insert will help learners develop ideas in planning their own events.



Copies of both reports are available from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Resources

Workplace Basic Skills: A Study of 10 Canadian Programs

This report features ten case studies of different types of workplace literacy programs across Canada.

The report was prepared by Maurice Taylor of the Partnerships in Learning research group, and funded by the National Literacy Secretariat.

The report describes how employers and employees have developed and sustained workplace training in work environments such as a university, a newspaper, a nursing care facility, a mine, and a textile manufacturing company. Each case study is based on interviews with managers, workers, union representatives, and program instructors. The case studies focus on questions such as:

- ◆ what makes this program innovative?
- ◆ what were the most common barriers experienced in setting up the program?
- ◆ what advice can be given to others planning to implement a workplace program?

The report also includes a section on what these programs tell us about good practice in workplace literacy.

Copies of the report are available on loan from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Filling the Gap: Learning and Language in Non-Formal Educational Settings

This report looks at the learning that takes place outside the formal education system in church basements, union halls, women's shelters, and abandoned classrooms in B.C.

The report is the product of a research project by a small group of adult educators from Douglas College and Okanagan University College, called the Adult Popular Education Community Research Group.

According to the report, non-formal education provides a vital service to thousands of British Columbians through programs that address significant issues in people's lives. Educational activities - from lectures and workshops to the use of theatre, music or dance - help people deal with issues such as addiction, parenting, poverty, and tenants' rights.

The report focusses on how these programs respond to the language and literacy needs of participants. In only a few cases did the research uncover organizations which specifically offered instruction in oral and written language. The report suggests that adult educators can play an important role by helping to fill this gap between language and learning in non-formal education in B.C.

Copies of the report are available from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Resources

Cultus Lake Literacy and Career Awareness Project: A Description of the Community-based Pilot Linking Education to Employment for Adults and Youth (age 9-13 years)

This 169-page handbook describes in detail the activities of a project designed to emphasize the link between literacy and employment for youth and adults in Cultus Lake, B.C. The project offered separate career awareness programs to adults in the community, and to students at Cultus Lake Elementary School.

The project was the result of a partnership among the University College of the Fraser Valley, Fraser Valley East Literacy Association, Cultus Lake Elementary School, School District #33 (Chilliwack), and Human Resources Development Canada.

Copies of the handbook are available on loan from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Literacy Materials Bulletin, Fall 1995

The Fall 1995 issue of the *Bulletin* contains reviews of writing, spelling, math, science, history, and general reading materials.

Copies of the current *Bulletin*, as well as the previous 11 issues, are available from Literacy B.C. Materials recommended in the *Bulletin* are available on loan from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Children in Danger: Leaving the Land, Leaving the Family, Working for a Living, Getting an Education.



This series of four books, produced by CoDevelopment Canada, is about the lives of street kids around the world and the problems they face in living and working on the street. These children's stories also tell of their efforts to leave the street and find a better life.

Copies of the books are available on loan from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

The books can also be purchased from:

CoDevelopment Canada
205 - 2929 Commercial Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V5N 4C8

Phone: 708-1495

Fax: 708-1497

E-mail: codev@web.apc.org

International Literacy Survey

The results of the first international survey to describe and compare the literacy skills of people from different countries were released in Paris on December 6.

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) measured adult literacy skills across the cultures and languages of seven industrialized countries: Canada, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland. The survey also collected data to explore the relationship between literacy and factors such as educational experience, income, occupation, and the use and practice of skills at work and at home.

The IALS was a collaborative effort by the seven national governments and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Canada played a leading role by designing and managing the survey which builds on the Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities (LSUDA) by Statistics Canada in 1989.

Detailed information on the Canadian data from the IALS will be released in March 1996. The Canadian report will analyse the results by province and by mother tongue, and will compare the IALS results to LSUDA.

For the purposes of the IALS survey, literacy was defined as: *Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.*

The IALS tested between 2000 and 3000+ adults in each country by asking them to complete specific tasks which focussed on literacy skills used in daily life. Skills were measured in three domains:

◆ **Prose literacy:** the ability to understand and use information from texts such as editorials, news stories, poems and fiction.

◆ **Document literacy:** the ability to locate and use information found in job applications, payroll forms, graphics, transportation schedules, maps, and tables.

◆ **Quantitative literacy:** the ability to use arithmetic skills to perform tasks such as balancing a chequebook, figuring out a tip, or completing an order form.

In each domain, survey respondents were grouped into five levels. Level 1 represents the lowest level of literacy, and Level 5 the highest.

Some of the survey's conclusions are:

◆ Important differences in literacy skills exist among and within the seven countries. In some countries, such as Poland, most of the population clusters into relatively narrow bands of proficiency. In other countries, such as Canada, there is a wide range of difference between adults with low and high levels of literacy.

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◆ Low literacy skills are found not just among marginalized groups, but affect large proportions of the entire adult population. Over half of the adults in some countries do not move beyond the two basic levels of literacy.

◆ Sweden outperforms the other countries by a wide margin.

◆ Literacy skills benefit from continuous practice. Using the library and reading daily effectively reinforce strong individual skills at work and at home. Literacy skills are fragile and can erode through neglect or misuse.

◆ Employment is positively related to literacy. Those who are employed are more likely to be at a higher skill level than those who are unemployed or outside the workforce.

◆ Literacy is not synonymous with educational attainment. In every country there are many cases of poorly educated people who perform well and a smaller but still significant number of highly educated people who perform poorly.

◆ Adults with low literacy levels do not usually acknowledge or recognize they have a problem. Survey participants at all literacy levels, when asked whether their reading skills were sufficient to meet their everyday needs, overwhelmingly replied that they were.

A report of the IALS, *Literacy, Economy, and Society*, is available on loan from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293. 

Prose Literacy - Sample Questions

- Level 1 Look at a medicine label to determine the maximum number of days you should take this medicine.
- Level 2 Identify a short piece of information about a garden plant, from a written article.
- Level 3 State which of a set of four movie reviews was the least favourable.
- Level 4 Answer a brief question on how to conduct a job interview. The reader is required to read a pamphlet on recruitment interviews and integrate two pieces of information into a single statement.
- Level 5 Use an announcement from a personnel department to answer a question that uses different phrasing from that used in the announcement.

Document and Quantitative Literacy Sample Questions

Fireworks in the Netherlands



Victims of fireworks



Use the chart to identify the year in which the fewest people in the Netherlands were injured by fireworks. (Document literacy, Level 2)

Calculate how many more people were injured in 1989 than in 1988. (Quantitative literacy, Level 3)

Announcements

Conference: The Challenge of Change

The tools instructors need to succeed in the classroom, and the tools learners need to succeed in the world, will be the focus of the 1996 conference of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. (ABEABC).

The theme of the conference, to be held at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, May 1-4, 1996, is "The Challenge of Change."

The keynote speaker at the conference will be Arthur Black. Black is the host of the CBC radio show, *Basic Black*, and the author of several witty and humorous books.

The ABEABC has issued a call for papers to be presented at the conference. In keeping with the theme, possible paper topics suggested are: personal growth; applied academics; demographics of students; funding formulas; economic changes; and technology instruction.

The deadline for submissions is January 9, 1996.

Presenters should submit a summary of the paper in less than 50 words, to:

Vicki Renner
Coordinator of Community Economic
Development Program
c/o Columbia Square Adult Learning Centre
1001 Columbia Street
New Westminster, B.C.
V3M 1C4
Fax: 527-8169 ☐

Looking for professional development?

The ABEABC is accepting proposals for professional development activities for ABE practitioners and other professionals in B.C. communities. Groups can apply for grants of up to \$1,000 to organize a professional development event. For an application form, contact:

Nita Jacob
School District #43 (Coquitlam)
Continuing Education
1100A Winslow Avenue
Coquitlam, B.C.
V3J 2G3
Phone: 936-4261
Fax: 936-6594

Want help with plain language?

The Plain Language Society will help community groups develop plain language materials. Through its mentoring program, the Society matches new members with experienced practitioners to work on projects for non-profit groups who could not otherwise afford the services of a plain language practitioner.

For further information, contact:

Plain Language Society
P.O. Box 5054
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 4A9
Phone: 730-4657